

3. *Primary sex ratio of the Baya :*

Repeated counting of breeding adults in 1970 in an area of *c.* 282 ha. including *c.* 72 ha. of rice-fields showed a sex ratio of 1.4 male : 1 female Baya. Three cases of death of breeding females in or near the nests were observed in that season, but none of males. To see if the sex ratio was different in the nestlings 29 examples were dissected in the present study. In a group of 15 nestlings of approximately 1-5 days age, there were 7 males and 8 females and in an older group of *c.* 5-10-day-old nestlings males and females were in equal numbers, giving an overall sex-ratio of 1 male : 1.007 female in the nestling stage.

4. *A population index of breeding males :*

In an area (*c.* 282 ha.) where 68 male Bayas and 50 completed nests were counted on 28 August 1970, 54 males and 47 completed nests were counted in the present study. Cultivation of Paddy and millets was very much restricted this year due to failure of the monsoon in this area.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the Sálím Ali-Loke Wan Tho Ornithological Research Fund which supported this work, and to Shri V. K. Chari, Curator, Prince of Wales Museum, and to Shri J. C. Daniel, Curator, Bombay Natural History Society, for their help in organising this field work. I am grateful to Dr. R. M. Naik of the Faculty of Science, M.S. University of Baroda, for his advice, and to Miss Saramma Isaac, Research Assistant, Bombay Natural History Society, for helping in microtomy.

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Septemper 13, 1971.

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11. SOME NOTES ON THE SEA SNAKE  
*LATICAUDA COLUBRINA* (SCHNEIDER)

In March 1969 I spent a week (13th to 19th) on South Sentinel Island, one of the uninhabited islands of the southern end of the Andaman group, as a member of an Ornithological collection party of the Society. The following observations made then regarding the sea snake *Laticauda colubrina* (Schneider) may be worth recording.

The shore extends over 40 metres of the sand and our tents were pitched on the island edge of the mangrove jungle. After sunset I obtained a specimen of this snake near our tents, far from the water, and on

the following evening we got another. During the course of our stay, I must have seen a dozen individuals on the sand. All were seen after sunset by torchlight and left the impression that they were headed for the jungle. Upon closer examination in Bombay, my specimens were found to be a male (812 mm) and a female (990 mm). The female had 7 eggs which showed no traces of development and measured 55-71 mm in length and 24-25 mm in breadth.

Smith's FAUNA, 1943, page 440, states that all species of the sub-family Hydrophiinae (family Hydrophiidae, sea-snakes) produce their young alive but makes no reference to the breeding arrangements of the other sub-family Laticaudinae. In a note in the *Bulletin of the Raffles Museum* 1931, 5: 54, S. Smedley refers to between 1 and 6 eggs being laid by individuals in a tank containing sea water. He goes on to discuss the probability of these eggs being laid prematurely in consequence of captivity but quotes lighthouse-keepers as stating that they had seen females coiled around eggs laid in crevices in rocks. Allowing for Malcolm Smith's statement that he had examined a specimen containing embryos enclosed in a semi-transparent covering, he concludes that oviparity and ovoviviparity may occur in the same species.

I am unable to add any definite information in this respect but it would appear that the habits of this species are unusual for a sea-snake for, apart from their moving inland, one was found a couple of feet off the ground on the branch of a tree.

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## 12. CANNIBALISM AND FEEDING IN TWO SNAKES, *TRIMERESURUS ALBOLABRIS* AND *AHAETULLA NASUTUS*

On 8 March 1965 I discovered that a young male Pit Viper (*Trimeresurus albolabris*) in my possession had killed and begun to swallow its Green Whip Snake (*Ahaetulla nasutus*) cagemate. As the former was a mere sixteen inches long and the latter thirty-six inches in length, this was at best a Pyrrhic victory. The pit viper succeeded in swallowing the first thirteen inches of the whip snake, before regurgitating its meal.

Once a skink (*Mabuya novemcarinata*) was dropped as food into a cage containing a *Ahaetulla nasutus* and a Bronzeback (*Dendrelapsis ahaetulla ahaetulla*). It was in due time struck by the Whipsnake and grasped by the right arm. The lizard broke free, when the snake turned and struck the Bronzeback, grasping it about an inch back of the head.